

INGREDIENTS

Should You Store Coffee in the Freezer?

Generally no, with this one exception.



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When you want to ensure an ingredient stays fresh longer, you put it in your freezer, right?

After all, we stash all kinds of ingredients in our freezer, ensuring we have fresh-tasting produce and quick-cooking proteins at the ready for weeknight-friendly meals. (We even prefer frozen shrimp.)

But what about coffee?

Should You Store Coffee in the Freezer?

“In general, you shouldn’t store your coffee beans in the freezer,” says Kaleena Teoh, coffee educator and co-founder of Coffee Project New York. Instead, freshly roasted coffee beans should be kept in a cool, dark, and air-tight environment to minimize the impact of light, oxygen, and humidity. “You should treat coffee like a vampire,” Teoh adds.

At first, freezer storage seems like a practical solution to slow down the degradation of the coffee beans. But one key side effect may be detrimental to coffee beans: the introduction of warm air that contains moisture. As you open the coffee bag or container, scoop out the amount you need, and close the bag, moisture can sneak in. That moisture turns into ice crystals that condense on the surface of the beans, spoiling the coffee.

When Is It OK to Freeze Coffee?

“Cold isn’t the enemy to coffee beans . . . moisture is,” said Colby Cox, coffee roaster of Atlas Coffee Club, a coffee subscription service.

If you buy coffee beans in large quantities, you may want to freeze them for longer-term storage. According to Cox, freezing beans is OK but may require extra steps to make sure “they’re in a container or environment that prohibits the free movement of air that is likely carrying moisture.” To eliminate moisture, he recommended portioning out the coffee and putting it in vacuum-sealed bags.

How to Store Coffee

If you do choose to freeze your coffee, it’s important to eliminate any opportunities for moisture to get introduced. Here’s how.

1. Measure out the amount of coffee that you will use. (So, if you brew with 20 grams of coffee for your pour-over, you will have to split the coffee bag into little doses of 20 grams.)
2. Seal those individual piles of coffee independently with a vacuum sealer.
3. Freeze.
4. Only take out the doses of coffee that you need. Keep everything else frozen until ready for consumption.

However, if you buy coffee in standard 12-ounce bags, you might go through a bag of coffee quickly enough that long-term storage won’t be needed. In that case, Teoh recommended the resealable coffee bags because they’re usually lined with plastic and a one-way valve that prevents oxidation in coffee. “By preventing oxygen from entering the bag, it prevents the coffee from oxidizing and the quality will deteriorate a little slower,” she said. Close the bag tightly, and your coffee will remain fresh.